

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELGRA 02483 240730Z

16

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAJ-01 NIC-01 IO-14 DRC-01 ACDA-19 /136 W

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R 240650Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9425

INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 2483

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT YO

SUBJECT: STAMBLOIC NAMED VICE PRESIDENT OF STATE PRESIDENCY

1. IN ITS FIRST SESSION AFTER BEING CONFIRMED BY ASSEMBLY, NEW SFRY PRESIDENCY CHOSE SERBIAN MEMBER PETAR STAMBOLIC TO BE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT. HIS TERM OF OFFICE IS ONE YEAR, AFTER WHICH POSITION WILL ROTATE TO ANOTHER MEMBER OF PRESIDENCY. HOWEVER, ORDER OF ROTATION HAS NOT YET BEEN ANNOUNCED. MITJA RIBICIC, A SLOVENE, WAS LAST VICE PRESIDENT OF OUTGOING PRESIDENCY.

2. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS HAD VERY LITTLE DIRECT CONTACT WITH STAMBOLIC. HIS UP-AND-DOWN PARTY CAREER, EXTENDING BACK TO 1930'S WHEN HE STUDIED AGRICULTURE AT BELGRADE UNIVERSITY, SEEMS TO CONFIRM MOST COMMON CHARACTERIZATIONS OF HIM: SOLID, CONSERVATIVE AND RIGID. A FIFTH PARTY CONGRESS IN 1948, DURING CONFRONTATION WITH STALIN, ELECTED HIM TO LCY CENTRAL COMMITTEE WHERE HE REMAINED UNTIL 1964; AFTER 1954 HE WAS ALSO MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. HE WAS BROUGHT BACK TO LCY PRESIDUM IN OCT 1966 FOLLOWING FALL OF ALEKSANDAR RANKOVIC AND BECAME PRESIDENT OF SERBINA LC; AT THE TIME, EMBASSY BELIEVED HE COULD BE DEPENDED ON TO CONTINUE PRECESS OF LIBERATION BEGUN WITH OUSTER OF RANKOVIC DESPITE REPUTATION FOR HAVING UNINSPIRING, OLD
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PAGE 02 BELGRA 02483 240730Z

GUARD CHARACTERISTICS.

3. NEW JOB WILL GIVE STAMBLOIC FOURM IN PUBLIC AND MEDIA,
AND CONTACT WITH HIGH-LEVEL VISITORS. BUT JUDGING BY
HIS RECORD, HE WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO EMULATE RIVICIC'S
OCCASIONAL FLAMBOYANCE OR ESTABLISH HIGH PUBLIC PROFILE.
IN THAT SENSE, STAMBOLIC APPEARS TO BE A SAFE CHOICE.
TOON

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